

# Falls Church

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## City Center Strategic Plan [FINAL SUBMISSION]



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✂ PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH ✂

*February 2002*

FALLS CHURCH  
❧ CITY CENTER STRATEGIC PLAN ❧



*Prepared by Street-Works*

*in consultation with*

*the staff, local officials and citizens of the City of Falls Church*

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# Preface

[THE FALLS CHURCH STRATEGIC PLAN.]



For decades, the City of Falls Church has been researching, planning, investigating and envisioning a vibrant and active downtown for its community. Numerous thoughtful and well-intentioned documents have resulted, but no development has arisen.

In Spring 2001, the City initiated the Falls Church Strategic Plan to finally provide the elusive last step — implementation. Street-Works, a strategic development company, was selected to provide concept planning, proforma analysis, government advisory services and an illustrative vision. Most importantly, they were charged with providing a developer's perspective to the process, recommending initiatives and regulatory changes that would encourage private investment.

This booklet documents the Strategic Plan.

***Thank you in advance for your interest  
in the Falls Church City Center Strategic Plan.***

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# *The Challenge*

[CREATING A STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN.]

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*Brown's Hardware and Grocery Store, circa 1890*

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# The Challenge

[ C R E A T I N G   A   S T R A T E G I C   D E V E L O P M E N T   P L A N . ]



## ***F*alls Church is a community dedicated to self-improvement.**

This trait is most evident in the number of master plans and urban design studies the City has commissioned. Unfortunately, these documents remain dormant, largely because prior emphasis has been placed solely on beauty, while practical realities were avoided. Therefore, none of these “dream schemes” were built. For this reason, Falls Church authorized a study that incorporated creativity and reality — a development plan.

A development plan incorporates visionary master planning elements — such as great public spaces and unique building character — and organizes them in a manner that attracts private development. In addition to planning and design, a development plan includes market realities, leasing strategies, financing and ownership issues, phasing, political and an extensive public process.

This development plan is based on months of strategy and detailed analyses. To further test its merits, the plan was vetted by national developers, contractors, and Street-Works’ development and investment partners. Finally, two community workshops and one public presentation involved the ideas and concerns of the people of Falls Church.

***This is a responsible and defensible plan*** that will:

- ✧ Organize public funding priorities
- ✧ Direct marketing and marketplace initiative
- ✧ Provide a coordinated advocacy tool

***This Falls Church Strategic Development Plan  
is undertaken with the premise that  
the goal is to get something successful built. NOW.***

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*Falls Church City Center proposed redevelopment strategy*





# *Falls Church Today*

[ REALITY RULES. ]

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*The Jefferson Institute, Falls Church's first public school, 1891*

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# *Falls Church's Recognizable Identity*

[ EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY. ]



***A*** **n oasis. A village. An educational stronghold.  
Community — by anyone's definition.**

Over the past several decades, Falls Church has accomplished the unlikely. With its distinct identity as a civic-minded, family-oriented, education-dedicated small town, Falls Church has persevered despite the growing tide of suburbanism that surrounds it.



The Falls Church “identity” is not happenstance, but a conscious and concerted effort by its residents and city government to foster the elements that make it special — schools, trees, volunteerism, parks, safety, and hometown devotion — regardless of population changes and surrounding growth.



***Historically and currently, Falls Church has excelled in two distinct categories: its residential life and its school system. The community's commitment to the highest quality housing and education has never wavered. It is Falls Church's 'brand' and identity.***

***Continued success is not guaranteed.*** Falls Church's foundation as a historic crossroads and its commitment to education have combined to make it a good place to live with high residential values. Falls Church today is:

- ✂ A convenient commuter location within the beltway and adjacent to Metro
- ✂ A community-scaled lifestyle based on schools rather than neighborhoods



***The costs of sustaining Falls Church's unique and competitive position (convenience with great schools) is increasing without a parallel growth in the tax revenues. This situation threatens the quality of the education program due to reduced resources and the community's lifestyle due to increased property taxes. Doing nothing is not an option.***



*The citizens of Falls Church are community-oriented.*



*Commuting is an important part of daily life for the citizens of Falls Church.*

# *The Current Challenge*

[ A S U M M A R Y O F I S S U E S . ]

**F**alls Church's **commercial environment is a negative.** The city's history and 'quality of life' are not represented by the physical characteristics of its commercial corridors and commercial district. It is indistinguishable from marginal neighboring areas and is not representative of a community that prioritizes quality in all things. Falls Church today is:

- ✧ **A vehicular-dominated environment** with high traffic speeds, high traffic volumes, too much pavement and few pedestrian amenities.
- ✧ **A poor quality built environment** of outdated, second-class, poorly maintained, stand-alone buildings of no urban or other unique characteristics.
- ✧ A 'place' with **no significant historic structures** or unique **open spaces**.

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***There are currently no unique existing assets around which to build a development strategy.***



*With Broad and Washington Streets, downtown Falls Church is vehicular-dominated.*



*The built environment contains many out-of-date, poorly-maintained buildings.*

# *Market Realities: Reality Bites*

[THE HARD TRUTH BEHIND A MARKET-BASED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.]

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*Spofford and Church Drug Store, 113-115 West Broad Street, circa 1890*

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# Market Trade Area

[ MORE THAN JUST FALLS CHURCH. ]



*M*ore than just Falls Church. Measuring the market demand for Falls Church City Center starts with the identification of various trading areas by use. For residential uses, Falls Church competes with all of metropolitan Washington, DC. For office uses, the competitive market is Northern Virginia. The retail trade area market is the most constrained. It is defined by road patterns, accessibility to the site, community boundaries, and ***the locations of competitive facilities.***



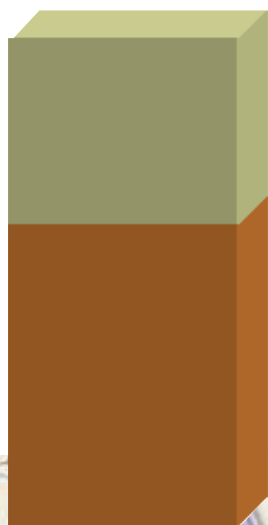
Within the Falls Church retail trading area, the population totaled 142,380 in 2000, an increase of nearly 11,000 people over the prior decade and a growth rate of 8.3 percent. Residents of this area are ethnically and racially diverse — and highly affluent with an average household income of over \$100,000.

At the heart of this broader trading area is the City of Falls Church. With a population of 10,377 in 2000, the City's average household income is estimated at \$107,500. The primary difference between the City of Falls Church and the total trading area is the ethnic and racial composition of its neighborhoods. According to the 2000 Census, approximately 85% of Falls Church residents categorize their ethnicity as "Caucasian."



*Falls Church is accustomed to providing for “its own,” but to generate sufficient market demand for the City Center, new development must appeal to the surrounding neighborhoods.*

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### **Trade Area**

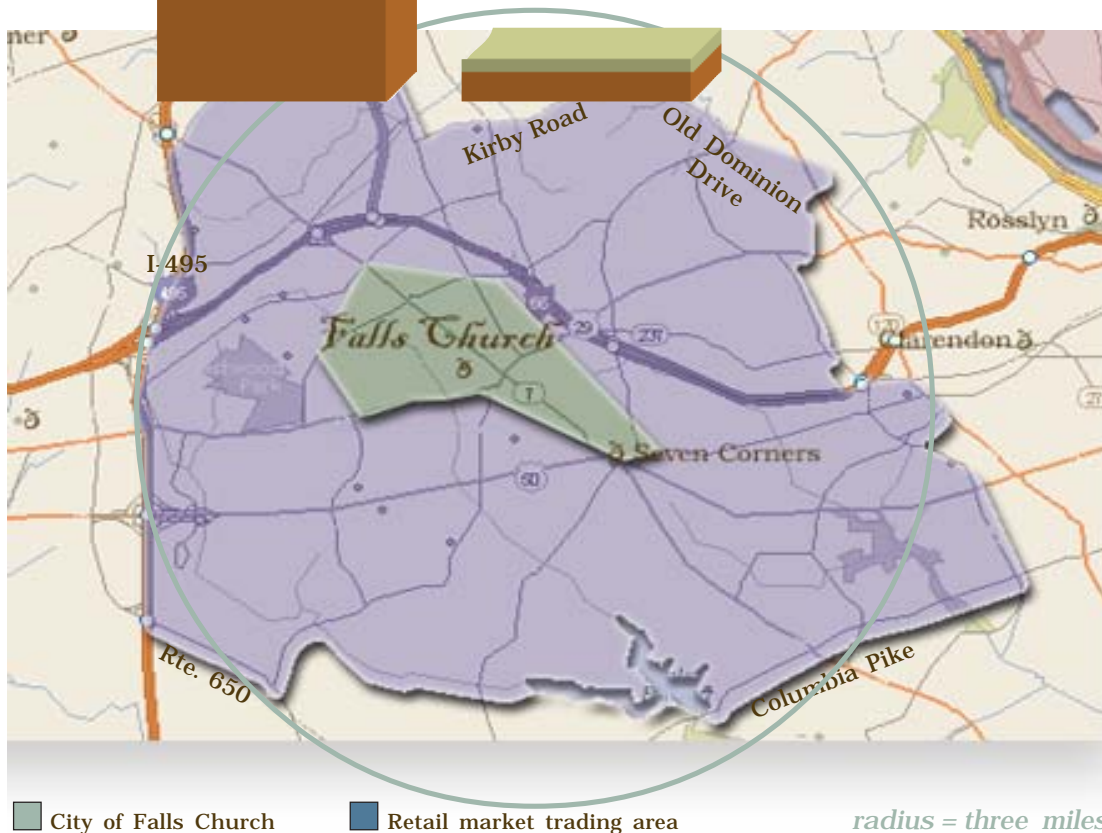
Population: 140,000

Ethnic mix: 60% Caucasian; 40% Other

### **City of Falls Church**

Population: 10,377

Ethnic mix: 85% Caucasian; 15% Other





# Competition Analysis

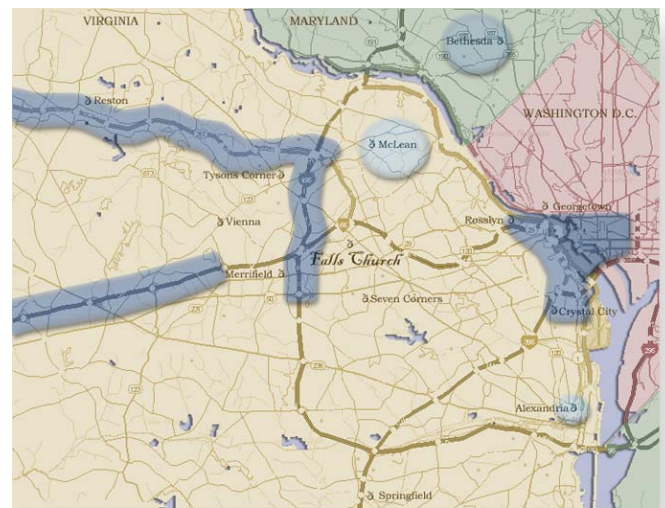
[ THE OFFICE MARKET. ]



***The Market has Built Up Around Falls Church.*** In the past, Falls Church has not capitalized on development opportunities as other communities have. As a result, Falls Church is surrounded by areas of intense competition for nearly every form of development and type of use. Metropolitan Washington, DC and Northern Virginia have an unusually large proportion of high-quality, innovative development.

## ***The Office Market.***

Tyson's Corner, Rosslyn/Ballston and Crystal City are the largest sub-markets with a total of more than 44 million square feet of office space. Falls Church's role in the Northern Virginia office market is small (1.4 million square feet of space equals approximately 1.5 percent of the total). Falls Church is not a recognized Class A office market.



■ Primary office locations    ■ Secondary office locations

The recent downturn in technology sectors impacted office space demand along technology corridors, leaving millions of square feet of sub-lease office space available. Early indications suggest that the market for Class B real estate, finance, insurance, legal and business services fields will not be as severely compromised by economic fluctuations. Currently, the Falls Church sub-market is associated with these non-technology types of office space.

Within the Falls Church sub-market, vacancy rates for the first quarter of 2001 were a minuscule 1.4 percent. During this time, 65,000 square feet were available at full service rents ranging from \$19.46 to \$25.19 per square foot.

The future of the 125,000 square foot building at 444 West Broad Street will set the standard for office growth in the Falls Church sub-market. Intended to attract major tenants with 25,000 square foot floor-plates and \$30.50 per square foot rents, this project, if successful, will usher in a new era in which Falls Church can become competitive with other larger sub-markets.



Any significant office development will require significant pre-leasing (40 percent) of total building square footage from a credit-worthy lead tenant. In the short-term, the enormous amount of available sublet space in outlying areas offers an attractive alternative to potential lead tenants with low rents and ready-to-occupy space. Obtaining pre-lease commitments for new construction in Falls Church will be difficult.

***The office program for Falls Church City Center will require a phasing strategy that allows for fluctuations in the office market over time.***



***Conservatively, Falls Church City Center could reasonably absorb 35,000 to 40,000 square feet annually for small offices. With a comprehensive strategy, this amount could double.***

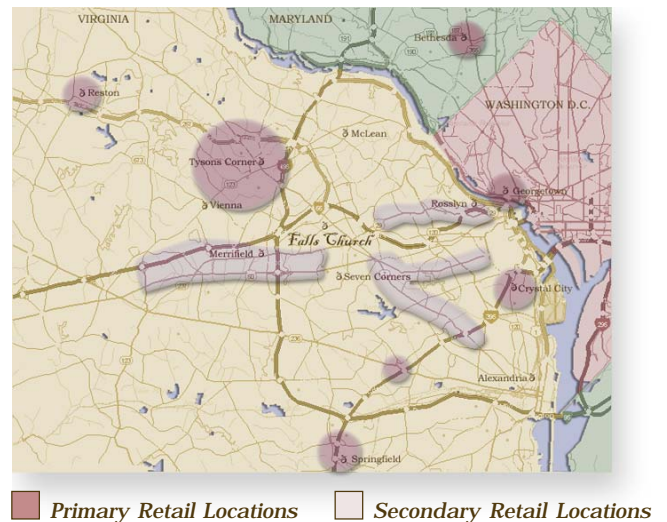
# Competition Analysis

[ THE RETAIL MARKET. ]



***There is no market demand for new retail.*** Tyson's Corner, Seven Corners and the Market Commons at Clarendon do and will contain every type, style and price-point.

Anyone familiar with the variety and selection of options in Tyson's Corner and Seven Corners understands the magnitude of the strong competitive retail lineup in the Falls Church area. The opportunities for mall-type stores (i.e. credit-worthy tenants) in City Center are severely limited. This will limit the amount and type of tenants because of financing difficulties.



Two dominant supermarket chains (Giant and Safeway) have multiple stores in the trading area. Close enough to have an impact, Fresh Fields is to the west and Harris-Teeter is building a new store to the north. Based on this competition, a supermarket is not a logical use for City Center.

Currently, the movie exhibition industry is in financial difficulty, and many major cinema chains are operating under bankruptcy protection. These facts aside, the demand for conventional theaters in the Falls Church area is satisfied. Competing theater operations include the 14-screen Lee Highway Multiplex Cinemas in Merrifield; the 12-screen Regal at Ballston Commons; and the 12-screen AMC at Skyline Mall.

Eliminating mall-type retailers, movie theaters and supermarkets leaves several retail options on the table. Convenience retailing and a complementary array of goods and personal services would be appropriate for City Center and could be supported by the local market. Currently found in Falls Church, these types of retailer belong in City Center.



Including restaurant and entertainment uses is also sensible, building on the existing kernels of success evident in downtown today. Logical prospects for this type of retail might include successful local operators with multiple locations, establishments such as Clyde's and the Four Provinces, start up ventures like Argia's and selected national chain operators.

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***The recommended retail program starts with a small grouping of unique specialty, lifestyle stores; complemented by a grouping of four to eight specialty restaurants; and supported by associated convenience goods and services including a drugstore, tailor, banks, a florist, etc.; and most importantly, a great local hardware store.***



# Competition Analysis

[ THE RESIDENTIAL MARKET. ]



***The residential market is the one development category where Falls Church is considered regionally competitive.***

Although schools are a major point of attraction, recent reports by The Grier Partnership indicate that location, accessibility and strong sense of community are also significant factors under-girding the housing market in Falls Church. There is sufficient market support for as much residential as the City Center can accommodate.

Over the past five years, permits for approximately 83,000 new housing units were issued in Northern Virginia with Fairfax County accounting for almost half.

In recent years, Falls Church has experienced three distinctive characteristics in its housing market.

First, housing prices have soared.

Based on sales reported in the

Metropolitan Regional Information System (MRIS), the average sales price of existing single-family homes in the City of Falls Church has increased from \$284,400 in 1998 to \$371,000 in the first six months of this year.

Affordability is a growing issue in Falls Church, requiring a more diverse mix of housing types and ownership types.



Second, new single family homes priced in excess of \$500,000 have been constructed in in-fill locations, with the housing market accepting smaller lot sizes. Third, townhouse sales are exceeding expectations, as evidenced by Falls Church Crest where 10 of 12 units have sold at an average of nearly \$200 per square foot.



Within the Northern Virginia market, condominiums have also demonstrated signs of strength in the past 12 months, with nearby units in Alexandria and Merrifield selling for an average of \$155 to \$160 per square foot.

Apartments with good visibility, transportation access and design are also performing well throughout Northern Virginia with average rents of \$1.50 per square foot.

- ✂ Falls Church is underdeveloped in most product types.
- ✂ A marketplace luxury exists to unlock existing potential.
- ✂ Residential development is the key to downtown revitalization.



***The housing market for City Center will comfortably support Center will comfortably support small townhouses with garage parking, mid-rise, multi-family rental apartments between 900 and 1,200 sf, and mid-rise condominiums between 1,300 and 1,600 sf.***



# Competition Analysis

[ MARKET BASED DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY. ]



***D*owntown will not develop by itself.** Falls Church is barely a location. It is certainly not a major regional address. Falls Church has historically discouraged major development. Over time, development has largely occurred in all the areas surrounding it. There is now little to no market demand for new development in downtown Falls Church. The market conditions for Falls Church are:

- ✧ ***No demand required for new retail.*** Falls Church is completely surrounded by all kinds of regional and local retail.
- ✧ ***No recognition as a viable, competitive office sub-market.*** There is no Class A office space in Falls Church that was not build-to-suit.
- ✧ ***Current high residential demand.*** Largely 'school' driven and oriented toward the single-family home by drawing school-age children.

Small things can happen — many are trying. Big things require big ideas, big leadership.



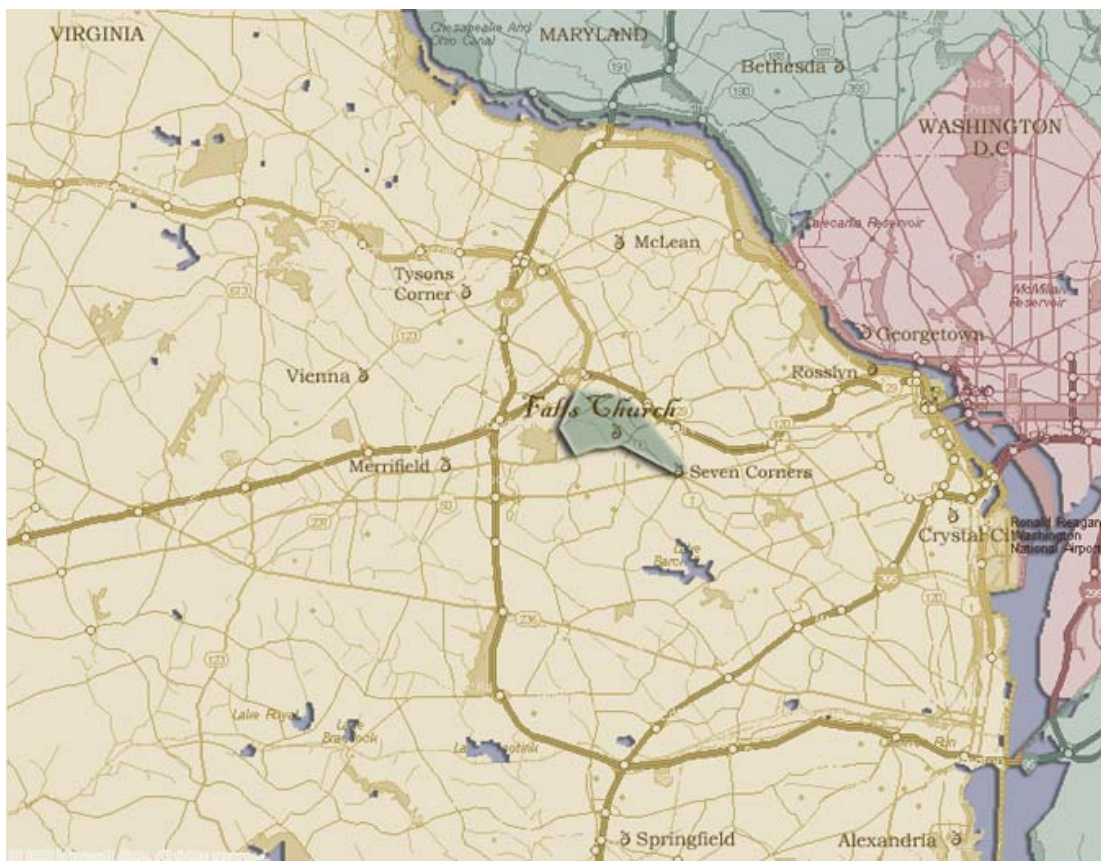
*Falls Church's office market is dominated by Class B spaces.*



*There is a high demand for quality residential development.*

***Limited market demand for commercial uses, land ownership patterns of small parcels and artificially high real estate values translates into no reason for development to occur in the downtown redevelopment area versus any other area of Falls Church.***

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***In order to be competitive in this marketplace, Falls Church must capitalize on its strengths (housing, location and history); create an address in the market to attract office; and target its retail ambition to providing for the City of Falls Church and surrounding residents.***



# Development Strategy

[KEY PRINCIPLES.]

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*Falls Church Drug Store, intersection of Broad and Washington Streets, 1953*

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# Sense of Place

[THERE IS NO PUBLIC 'HEART OF FALLS CHURCH.']



**F**alls Church is essentially 'built-out' and has no significant central public gathering place, no 'heart of town.' There is no 'great place' in Falls Church.

**Sense of Place Competition.** Alexandria, Georgetown and Leesburg have histories similar to Falls Church – independent communities with recognizable identities that were founded and can exist independently of Washington, DC. The more recently developed communities of Bethesda and Reston, as well as Shirlington and Market Commons, provide additional 'places' within the area.



*Currently, Falls Church caters to automobile traffic rather than pedestrians.*



*This small park is the only open space in the center of Falls Church.*

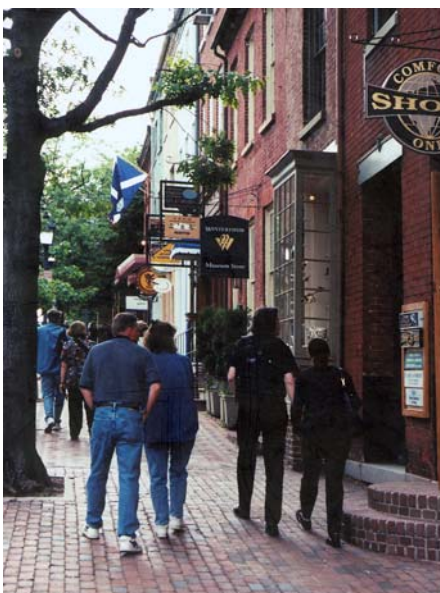


*Falls Church does not offer any competition to these other towns' "sense of place" as established by the commercial downtown areas.*

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*Downtown Leesburg's historic old town attracts regional visitors.*



*Pedestrians enjoying Old Town Alexandria's King Street.*



*Landmark buildings punctuate Georgetown's M Street.*



# The Great Place Strategy

[ C R E A T I N G   A   G R E A T   P L A C E   F O R   F A L L S   C H U R C H . ]



*The challenge for Falls Church is to capitalize on its positive reputation and 'brand' to create a new position* in the commercial marketplace. Achieving this objective will both create new opportunities that do not exist now while reinforcing and protecting the characteristics that created this reputation.

To this end, the community must embark on a 'the great place strategy' to:

- 1. Consolidate control of a significant amount of land.*
- 2. Create a great public gathering place.*
- 3. Anchor it with important public facilities.*
- 4. Support the community life of Falls Church.*
- 5. Attract a critical mass of unique private development.*

The results of this strategy will be to:

- ✧ **Reinforce** Falls Church's 'brand' position in the market as a unique place to live by sustaining high real estate values and therefore property taxes.
- ✧ **Add** to Falls Church's 'brand' position as a unique community by creating a public gathering place with public facilities for community interaction for all its citizens.
- ✧ **Expand** Falls Church's 'brand' position as a unique place to live with a more diverse mix of residential types (and ownership) to appeal to a broader demographic.
- ✧ **Create** a Falls Church 'brand' position as a unique commercial address to attract retail and commercial uses and therefore an expanded tax base.
- ✧ **Change** the character of commercial Falls Church to reflect citizens' values of village scale and walkability into a place of which to be proud.
- ✧ **Catalyze** high quality development along commercial corridors adjacent to the redevelopment area.

***This strategy greatly enhances the existing potential for City Center's Phase One program.***

<b><i>Use</i></b>	<b><i>No Place Market</i></b>	<b><i>Great Place Market</i></b>
<b><i>Retail</i></b>	<b><i>no new demand</i></b>	<b><i>50,000 - 125,000 gsf</i></b>
<b><i>Office</i></b>	<b><i>0-50,000 gsf</i></b>	<b><i>50,000 - 125,000 gsf</i></b>
<b><i>Residential</i></b>	<b><i>unlimited</i></b>	<b><i>unlimited</i></b>



*Core redevelopment area*

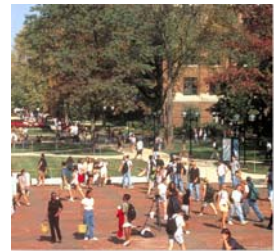
# What Makes a Great Place?

[ D E F I N I N G   A   ‘ G R E A T   P L A C E . ’ ]



*T*here is no ‘great place’ in Falls Church. A great place for Falls Church would include:

- ✧ **An immersive, pedestrian-oriented place** (although convenient for cars) such as a main street, village green or town square that is large enough for community-sized events and intimate enough to be comfortable for two people to stroll through and enjoy.
- ✧ **A public, community place with public facilities** such as a city hall, church, post office, recreation center, theater, library, or museum that is the center of daily life for the people of that community.
- ✧ **Surrounded by residences and offices** in buildings that have a pedestrian scale and architectural character that is unique to the community.
- ✧ **Commercial uses on the first floor** such as restaurants, shops, galleries, and services that provide interest and activity on the sidewalk during all parts of the day.





*For new development of any magnitude to occur in Falls Church, the City must create a 'great place' of enough significance that is a regional attraction and address.*



**Princeton's Palmer Square** has all the attributes of a GREAT PLACE — memorable open space, intimate scale, distinct identity and a constant sense of belonging.



**Country Club Plaza** became a GREAT PLACE by taking a main street concept one step further — making every sidewalk and street corner a piece of a "public art gallery."



**Georgetown's** GREAT PLACE quality is framed by icon buildings and connected by lively sidewalk activity.

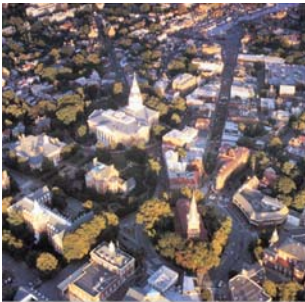


Surrounding a civic open space, **Alexandria's Old Town** has earned the rank of GREAT PLACE by offering parks, uses, character and sidewalks that appeal to visitors, residents and workers alike.



# Great Places Across the Nation

[EXAMPLES OF 'GREAT PLACES.']



The significance assigned to **Annapolis' State and Church Circles** creates a GREAT PLACE that provides hierarchy to the downtown.



One of the country's best known GREAT PLACES, **Rockefeller Center's** energy is generated from surrounding shops and restaurants as well as vibrant public uses.



**Lake Forest's Market Square** represents many elements of a suburban GREAT PLACE — a town green, an active retail district, and places for people to shop, work, live and call their own.



**Worth Avenue's** famous retail character combined with its intriguing nooks and crannies makes a GREAT PLACE for locals and tourists alike.



As a new GREAT PLACE, ***Celebration, Florida*** has dedicated tremendous resources to programming, and thereby activating, their public spaces, main street and sidewalks.



***Mizner Park's*** "one of a kind" GREAT PLACE created a focal point for Boca Raton's residential, cultural, office and retail development.



***Reston Town Center*** was a good place until the improvements at Fountain Square — most notably the ice skating rink — made it a GREAT PLACE.



The combination of local and national retailers, along with a significant grouping of specialty restaurants makes ***Bethesda Row*** a GREAT PLACE.

# Location

[ THE GREAT PLACE SHOULD BE IN THE CENTER. ]



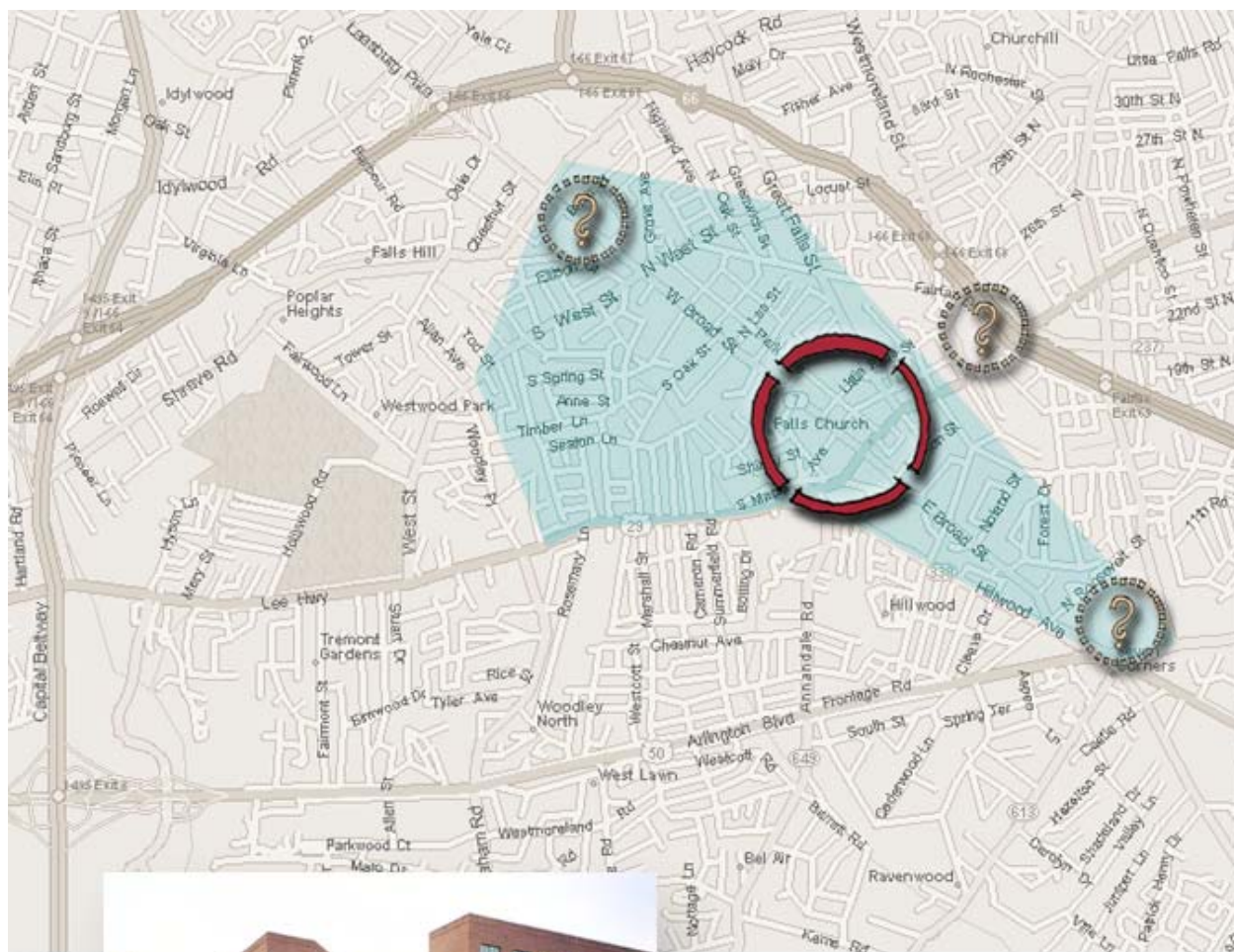
*I* t requires an act of public confidence to create a new great public place. There are several parcels of underutilized land that could be candidates for this approach and would bring city benefit from an increased density program. These include locations near the Metro stations or other large parcels that are underutilized and/or owned by one (or few) landowners at a economic land value. Although measurably more difficult due to economic (cost of land/infrastructure), social (displacement of tenants) and political factors, the public intervention required to begin this strategy should occur near the center of Falls Church because:

- ✧ The center of Falls Church has **visual access to the greatest numbers of regional traffic** to achieve its role as a symbol or 'billboard' to the rest of the region about the character and unique qualities of Falls Church.
- ✧ A great place should be the focus for public uses which should be **equally accessible** parts of the community.
- ✧ The 'historic' location of Falls Church's origin is the most degraded environment in the City with the **least likely chance of redevelopment without public assistance.**
- ✧ The great place should be the center or hub of accessibility from the pedestrian to mass transit. The center of Falls Church is **between the two existing major roadways, highway access points, and two Metro stations.**
- ✧ The **most underutilized land** is adjacent in the center of town (along two corridors) and can be catalyzed for new development as a result of an initial public intervention and development project.
- ✧ **Density, height, and traffic increases will have the least negative impact** on adjoining residential neighborhoods at the center of two regional corridors.



***The creation of a great public place as a catalyst for new development should occur near the historic center of town.***

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- City of Falls Church
- Surrounding neighborhoods
- Sites for potential future development
- Prime location for development project





# *Principles for Creating a Great Place*

[G R E A T P L A C E P R I N C I P L E S .]

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*Veterans marching down Broad Street in the Memorial Day Parade, 1948*

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# Great Place Principle One

[THE PLACE MUST BE ALONG A 'FALLS CHURCH STREET.']



***The success of this great place strategy is directly proportional to its uniqueness and its character as experienced by the pedestrian.*** As a result, this place cannot happen at the intersection of Broad and Washington Streets because the speed, noise and volumes of traffic have created a vehicular environment. Broad Street cannot become this place for Falls Church for the same reasons. A new location must be identified in this area that can be completely designed to create a great street and public place. A reconfigured Maple Avenue is proposed for this great place due to:

- ✧ **Visibility.** Maple Avenue has visibility to and from Broad Street to act as a 'symbol' for the Falls Church 'brand.'
- ✧ **No Traffic.** Maple Avenue carries no significant traffic so it can be more easily configured into a pedestrian-biased environment.
- ✧ **Center of Underutilized Land.** There are four adjacent development parcels which can support the required program and its parking at a high density. Therefore, new buildings can be configured to create the necessary character of the place.



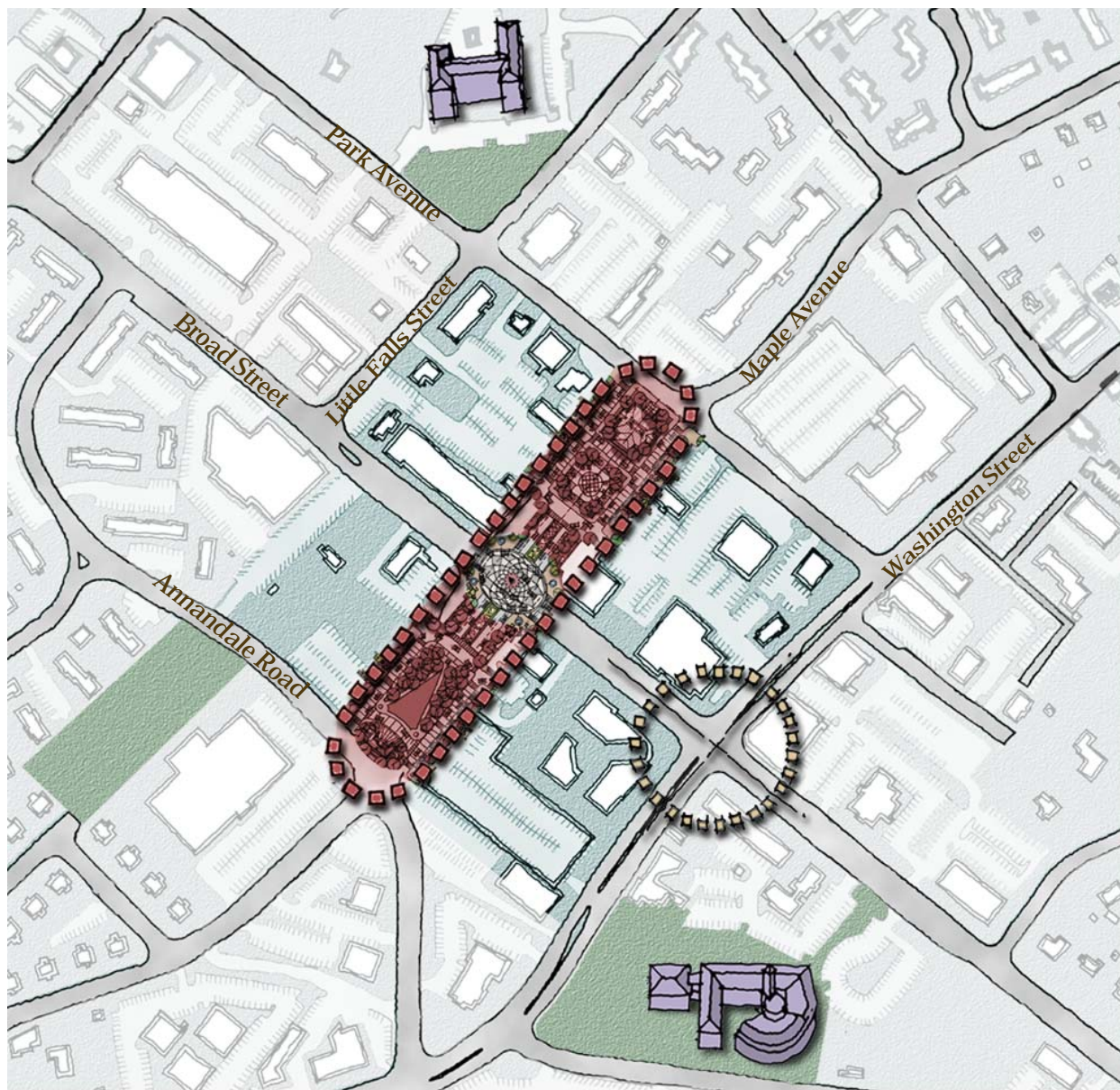
*Busy commuter traffic from surrounding communities makes the intersection of Broad and Washington Streets "for the region," and impossible as a local pedestrian place.*



*Configure City Center's primary intersection at the corner of Broad and Maple Streets for the people of Falls Church.*

***Reconfigure existing Maple Avenue as the general location to create a new great public place.***

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- Historic 'center of town'
- Proposed future 'center of town'



# *A Significant Destination*

[GREAT PLACE PRINCIPLE ONE, CONTINUED.]



***T***his place must be a **significant destination**. To effectively change the market position of downtown Falls Church, this new 'great place' must be of a magnitude to make an impact, particularly as you drive along Broad Street. This great place should have the following characteristics:

- ✧ **Gateway Placemaking.** A significant destination should be evident on both sides of Broad Street from Park Avenue to Annandale Road creating a 'gateway' effect. The intersection should be marked with a significant 'civic marker' to designate its importance, much like the 'southern soldier' at Washington and Prince Streets in Old Town Alexandria.
- ✧ **Size.** The place must be wide enough to allow retail visibility from Broad Street along Maple Avenue.
- ✧ **Pedestrian-orientation.** Trade left-hand, vehicular turn movement and signal time for a significant pedestrian friendly crossing across Broad Street. This intersection should be designed as an urban place with special paving, lighting and other urban amenities.



*Currently, the intersection of Broad Street and Maple Avenue is undistinguished and pedestrian-unfriendly.*



*Statuary and special paving work together to create a landmark intersection that is both memorable and functional.*

***Make the great public space reach from Park Avenue to Annandale Road with a significant gateway feature on either side of Broad Street to create maximum impact.***

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*Proposed great place*

# Great Place Principle Two

[THIS PLACE MUST BE A ONE-OF-A-KIND FALLS-CHURCH PLACE.]



**T**urrently, the downtown district is anchored by two of the town's most important historic and cultural assets: the **City Hall and the Falls Church**. These influences provide a vision for the concept and character of the great place. Like Church and State Circles in Annapolis, the character of this great place should reflect these two influences through the creation of two squares: Democracy Square and Freedom Square.



- ǃ **Address.** Today, parcels not immediately adjacent to Broad Street have no “address.” Creating public spaces provides additional “address” locations for Falls Church.



- ǃ **Centralized public squares.** These create “a place to be” off Broad Street and will provide greater visibility — important for safety as well as office and retail viability.



- ǃ **Hardscape parks.** Spaces with paving, fountains and open plazas attract visitors for numerous public social functions.

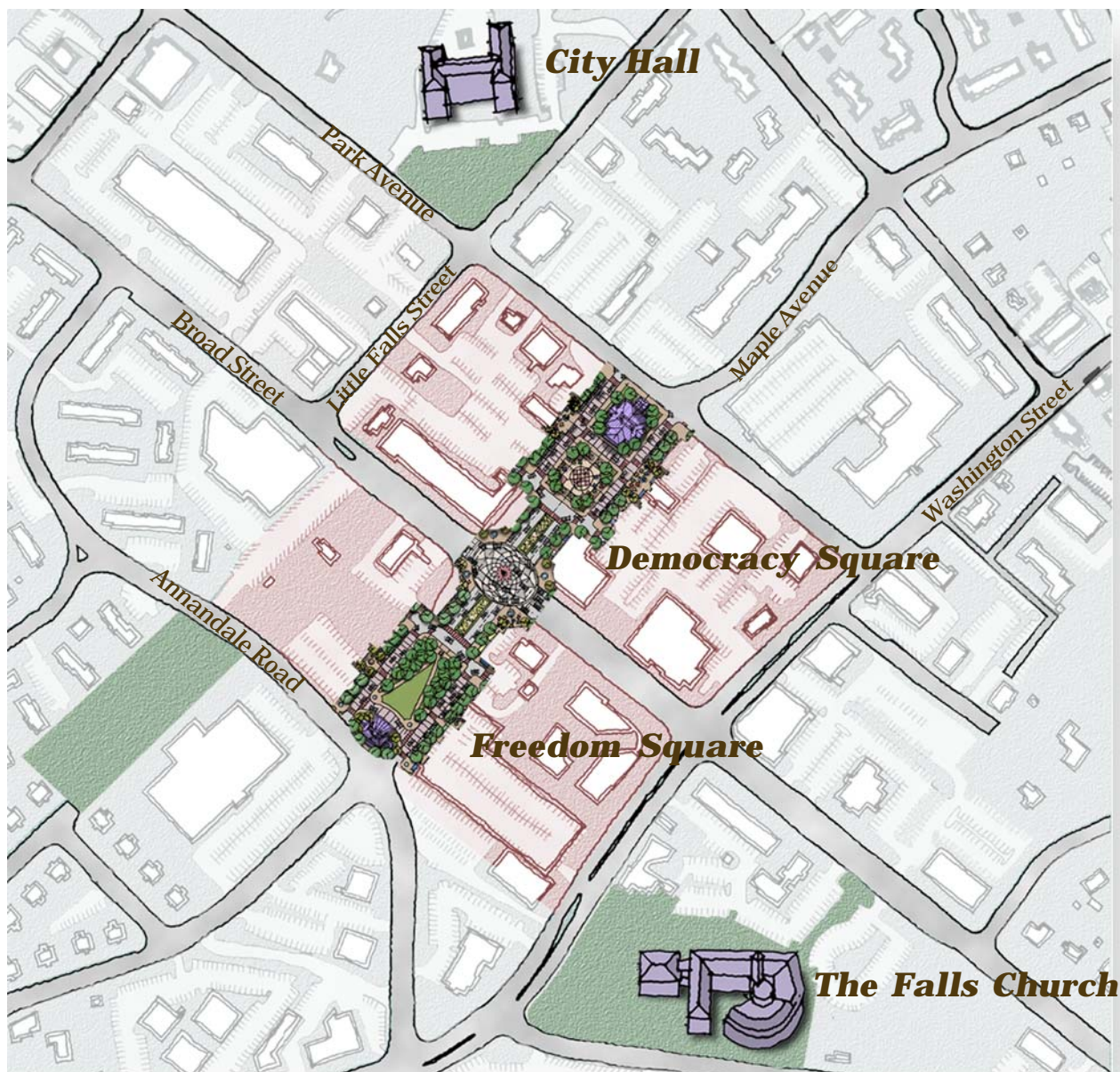


- ǃ **Softscape parks.** Spaces designed with lawns and landscaping provide opportunities for quiet community gatherings and activities.



***Build on the assets of downtown to create two great squares: Democracy Square, a lively, active, commercial ‘Town Square’ and, Freedom Square, a quiet, passive ‘Village Green’.***

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 Core redevelopment area



# Democracy Square

[G R E A T P L A C E P R I N C I P L E T W O , C O N T I N U E D . ]



***D**emocracy Square will be located on the north side of Broad Street and will be an environment designed to facilitate community gatherings and activities.* This square will have a predominantly hardscape environment. Like the traditional plazas of European cities, it will have the following characteristics:



- ✧ **Active amenities.** An environment such as Democracy Square may include active amenities such as interactive fountains, a carousel and/or a kids' area.



- ✧ **Commercial activities.** Cafes and kiosks are among the commercial activities that bring visitors to public spaces, activating and enlivening the square.



- ✧ **Active events.** An ice skating rink, a farmer's market, or an antiques market could provide Democracy Square with seasonal activity.



- ✧ **Outdoor entertainment.** Outdoor movies, concerts, and dances are among the many forms of outdoor entertainment welcomed in this type of environment.



*Autumn in Democracy Square*



*Summertime in Democracy Square*



# Freedom Square

[G R E A T P L A C E P R I N C I P L E T W O , C O N T I N U E D .]



**F**reedom Square will be located on the south side of Broad Street and will be an environment designed to encourage more passive gatherings and activities. Like the traditional village squares of New England, it will have the following characteristics:



✧ **A predominantly softscape environment.**

Grass and large trees bring a soft, quiet environment to the heart of downtown.



✧ **Passive amenities.** A pond, croquet or bocci court, picnic area and wedding chapel, children's play area, or chess center provide passive outdoor activities for the community.



✧ **Few, if any, commercial activities.** Freedom Square is meant to be a place for passive gatherings, not a frenzied retail environment.



✧ **Active events.** Freedom Square may host such active events as tai chi classes, soft musical concerts, weddings, soft festivals.



*Springtime in Freedom Square*



*Wintertime in Freedom Square*



# Great Place Principle Three

[THIS PLACE MUST BE ANCHORED BY IMPORTANT COMMUNITY USES.]



*This place must not only be the ‘heart of the town’ symbolically, but also functionally.* Accomplishing this objective requires a commitment from the City to locate important public facilities in the squares, emphasizing the long-term importance of the place. The following city assets are candidates for being located at the ends of the new great place:

## Democracy Square



- ✧ A relocated City Hall
- ✧ A new Council Chamber Meeting Hall
- ✧ A Community Center expansion
- ✧ A new student resource center
- ✧ A school run day-care facility
- ✧ A new Community Arts Facility
- ✧ A permanent market hall



## Freedom Square



- ✧ A new or relocated library
- ✧ A relocated Post Office
- ✧ A new recreation center
- ✧ A new Museum
- ✧ A wedding chapel/banquet facility



***An important building with public uses must be located (or relocated) to the end of the great place at Park Avenue and Annandale Road to anchor the great place.***

# *Developing Around a Great Place*

[BUILDING PRINCIPLES.]

§ § §



*Dedication of Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park Bridge, 1992*

§ § §

# Building Principle One

[CONSOLIDATE DEVELOPMENT INTO A DISTINCT, COMPACT DISTRICT.]



The creation of a significant public gathering place with important civic uses is only complete with **adjacent private uses that create the ‘walls’ of the space, define the scale and character of the place, and activate the place** with the people who live, work and shop there.

**The new redevelopment area should focus only on the area adjacent to the proposed public spaces,** as this adjacency will be responsible for any significant market interest. Because of high land costs, the redevelopment area should be of a size appropriate to accommodate the initial program in a compact, dense development. The first steps:

- ✧ **Consolidate land.** Consolidate land control and focus new development on the four blocks bounded by Annandale Road, Park Avenue, Little Falls Street, and Washington Street.
- ✧ **Develop a clear edge condition.** Make the City Center District a visually cohesive place through public amenities such as streetscape, public art and gateways.
- ✧ **Define the character of the streets.** Change the character of boundary streets (excluding Washington Street) by making them tree-lined boulevards.



A true sense of encountering a special area of Falls Church is missing in City Center.



On-going plans to coordinate planters and banners need to be supplemented with an overall strategy for a “City Center way of doing things” along its streets and sidewalks.



***Consolidate land control and focus new development on the four blocks adjacent to the proposed squares.***

☒ ☒ ☒



■ Core redevelopment area



# Building Principle Two

[ GOOD PARKING MAKES GREAT SIDEWALKS. ]



**Create an effective parking system that helps organize development.** As a regional destination, the majority of people arriving at this location will be travelling by car. Therefore, their Falls Church experiences begin when they start their trip. The sequence of finding the project, experiencing the public space, locating a place to park and arriving to the sidewalk must be a **managed experience** that reinforces the overall goals. This is a **park once and walk** arrangement that will require a system that prioritizes:



- ✧ **Central garages.** Convenient, easy to find, centralized system of customer-friendly garages located in the center of each block.
- ✧ **Easy access.** Vehicular and pedestrian access to garages from the central public space by streets and sidewalks activated by slow-moving traffic with parallel parking.
- ✧ **Convenient entry.** Clear, convenient and safe customer access to the public space through well-designed stairs and elevators in the garage and safe and interesting passageways to and from the garages.



Currently, the lack of parallel parking and other traffic-calming devices contribute to an unsatisfactory pedestrian experience.



With VDOT, creating parallel on-street parking throughout City Center should be investigated.

**Create an effective street parking system and consolidate parking into centralized, shared, consumer-oriented structures in the middle of each development block.**

3 3 3



- Parallel parking
- Pedestrian access system
- Parking garage elevator/stair cores

# Shared Parking Analysis

[ BUILDING PRINCIPLE TWO, CONTINUED. ]



**B**ased on the one-garage-per-block strategy; **a maximum of 2,200 to 2,400 cost-effective, customer-friendly structured parking spaces** are proposed. This parking strategy is based on these principles:

- ✧ **On-street parking.** All streets surrounding the public spaces have one lane of parallel parking at the retail sidewalk to produce approximately 40 – 50 parking spaces.
- ✧ **Two-bay garage configurations.** Because of the fixed block sizes and only two possible entry points per garage, the garage footprints will be limited to only two-bay (120 feet wide) configurations.
- ✧ **Cost-effective garages.** To minimize structured parking costs and create safe, consumer friendly parking, all garages spaces are assumed to be open-air, day-lit, structures of 50 feet tall or six levels. Below-grade and/or enclosed garages are not considered economical or desirable.
- ✧ **Shared-parking.** Since each block is proposed with a mixed-use strategy, a shared-parking strategy has been anticipated. A parking balance per block is preferable with the requirement of a balance between the two blocks on either side of Broad Street a minimum. The shared use assumptions are shown in the table and are appropriate for future parking calculations as the development program changes.



*This shared parking scenario realistically limits the mixed-use development yield in the core area to 800,000 –1,000,000 sf.*



### Shared Parking Assumptions Spreadsheet

Use	Units	Weekday			Weekend	
		Night	Day	Evening	Day	Evening
<b>Residential</b>	-	100%	60%	90%	80%	90%
1.8 Space/Unit	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Office</b>	-	5%	100%	10%	10%	5%
3.4 spaces/1,000 sf	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Retail</b>	-	5%	70%	90%	100%	70%
4 spaces/ 1,000 sf	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Large Format</b>	-	5%	70%	90%	100%	70%
4 spaces/ 1,000 sf	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Hotel</b>	-	80%	80%	100%	80%	100%
1 space/room	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Restaurant (1/2 of Gross)</b>	-	10%	50%	100%	50%	100%
1 space/ 38.9 sf serving	-	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Cinema (30K Arts)</b>	-	10%	40%	100%	80%	100%
1/4 seats	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Note: The preceding chart shows the assumed base requirement for parking by use and shared parking standard used in this analysis by time of day*



# Building Principle Three

[CREATE A DIVERSE, 18 HOUR-A-DAY PLACE.]



*The key to a lively, successful public place is people*, lots of people, at all times of day:

- ✧ **Mixed-use.** Each of the four blocks (rather than individual buildings) should be mixed-use.
- ✧ **Market-based location.** The types and mix of uses need to reinforce and maximize this experience while at the same time following market-based location and layout criteria that ensures their best chance to get built and be successful.
- ✧ **Market-based use.** Each building will contain a predominant use located on the block according to market demand and may (not must) have a different ground-floor use.
- ✧ **Street-level use.** Every attempt must be made to have an experienced-base retail and restaurants around the perimeter of the public squares. In the event that there is no market response to this opportunity, the character of the public space should be designed to support the predominant use around that space.



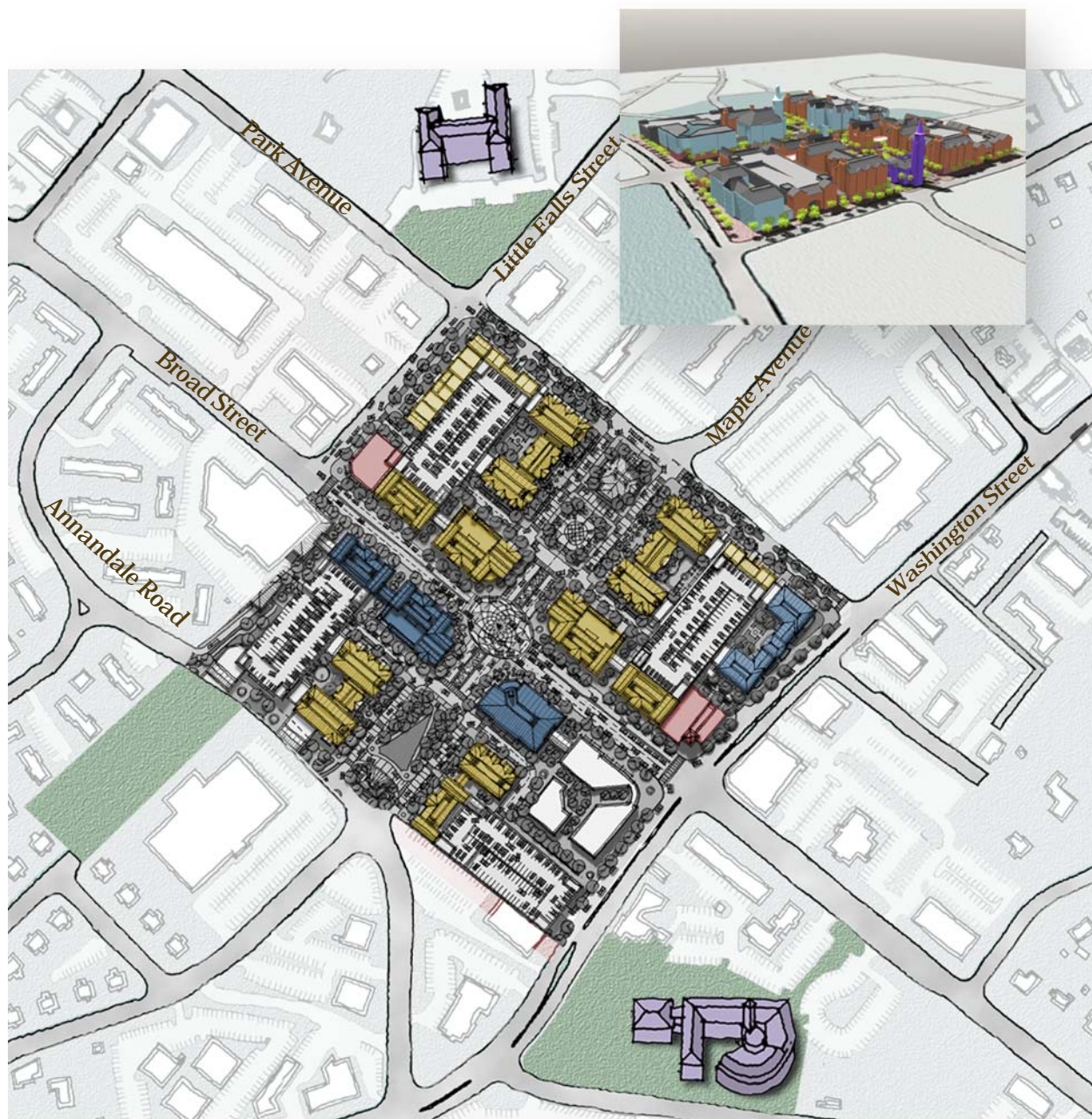
*Currently, uses are not mixed within Center City. Consequently, there are considerable times of inactivity in the downtown.*






*A healthy combination of retail, office, entertainment and residential uses will provide Falls Church with an active, 18-hour City Center.*

*Each of the four blocks of redevelopment must be mixed-use.*



-  Predominant retail uses
-  Predominant residential uses
-  Predominant office uses

# Development Uses

[ BUILDING PRINCIPLE THREE, CONTINUED. ]



**Retail Uses.** *Retail and restaurants should focus around the new public places* with a premium placed on creating a great sidewalk experience with cafes, kiosks and outdoor merchandising.

- ✧ **Stand-alone destination retail.** The corners of Maple Avenue and Broad Street should be reserved for the most significant or creditworthy retail opportunities. These tenants would be one or two levels with no secondary uses above them and might include Brown's Hardware and lifestyle tenants such as books/music, hard-goods, or furnishings.
- ✧ **Big-box retail.** Because of the small block size, expensive parking requirements and mixed-use strategy there should be no big-box or anchor format stores (30,000 sf and up) in the core area.
- ✧ **Second floor retail.** Retail should be used strategically to generate sidewalk activity. Therefore, no stand-alone second floor retail will be found in the redevelopment.
- ✧ **Destination restaurants.** Local, credit-worthy and ethnic food restaurants should occupy key corner positions to draw customers to City Center.
- ✧ **Small local and boutique shops.** These tenants should fill in the areas between the destination restaurants and large shops to create the interest and local character for the district.





**The total anticipated new retail program: 100,000-140,000 sf.**

3 **One stand-alone, large-format; 10,000-20,000 sf.**

3 **Six to Eight Restaurants; 35,000-45,000 sf.**

3 **Small Shops; 50,000-70,000 sf.**

3 3 3



- Retail uses
- ⊗ Stand alone retail
- ★ Potential restaurant locations



# Residential Uses

[ BUILDING PRINCIPLE THREE, CONTINUED. ]



*R*esidential uses should orient primarily towards surrounding neighborhoods and new public squares rather than Broad and Washington Streets.

- ✧ **Location.** The balance of residential uses should be weighted toward the two blocks north of Broad Street.
- ✧ **Product types.** Upper floor uses directly adjacent to the public space should be the highest quality and/or most unique residential product to the Falls Church market, including for-sale condominiums.
- ✧ **Single-use residential buildings.** Residential units not directly on the public squares may include residential on the ground floor, rather than retail.



**Total anticipated residential program: 400-500 units; 400,000-600,000 sf.**

- § **Mixed-Use Apartments: 200-250 units; 200,000-250,000 sf**
- § **Mixed-Use Condos/Apartments: 100-150 units; 100,000-150,000 sf**
- § **Single-Use Condos/Apartments: 100 units; 100,000 sf**

§ § §




- Mixed-use apartments
- Mixed-use condos/apartments
- Single-use condos/apartments

# Office Uses

[ BUILDING PRINCIPLE THREE, CONTINUED. ]



 **Office uses should orient towards the commercial corridors of Broad and Washington Streets** where they can benefit from visibility and maximum height potential. As Falls Church's office market becomes more established with the creation of the "great place," more commercial space may seek this area as a location. For this reason, office developments should be phased to capitalize on future interest.

- ✧ **Gateway towers.** Mixed-use, Class A office space should locate along Broad Street on either side of the new Maple Street entrance to Freedom Square.
- ✧ **Built-to-suit.** A single-use, corporate office building can be located along Washington Street at Park Avenue to provide a built-to-suit opportunity that can be timed independently from the creation of the public spaces.
- ✧ **Professional offices.** Mixed-use professional office space should be part of the Broad Street development to include the traditional Falls Church office user (including existing tenants) in the 'Heart of Town.'



**Total Anticipated Office program:  
230,000-260,000 sf**

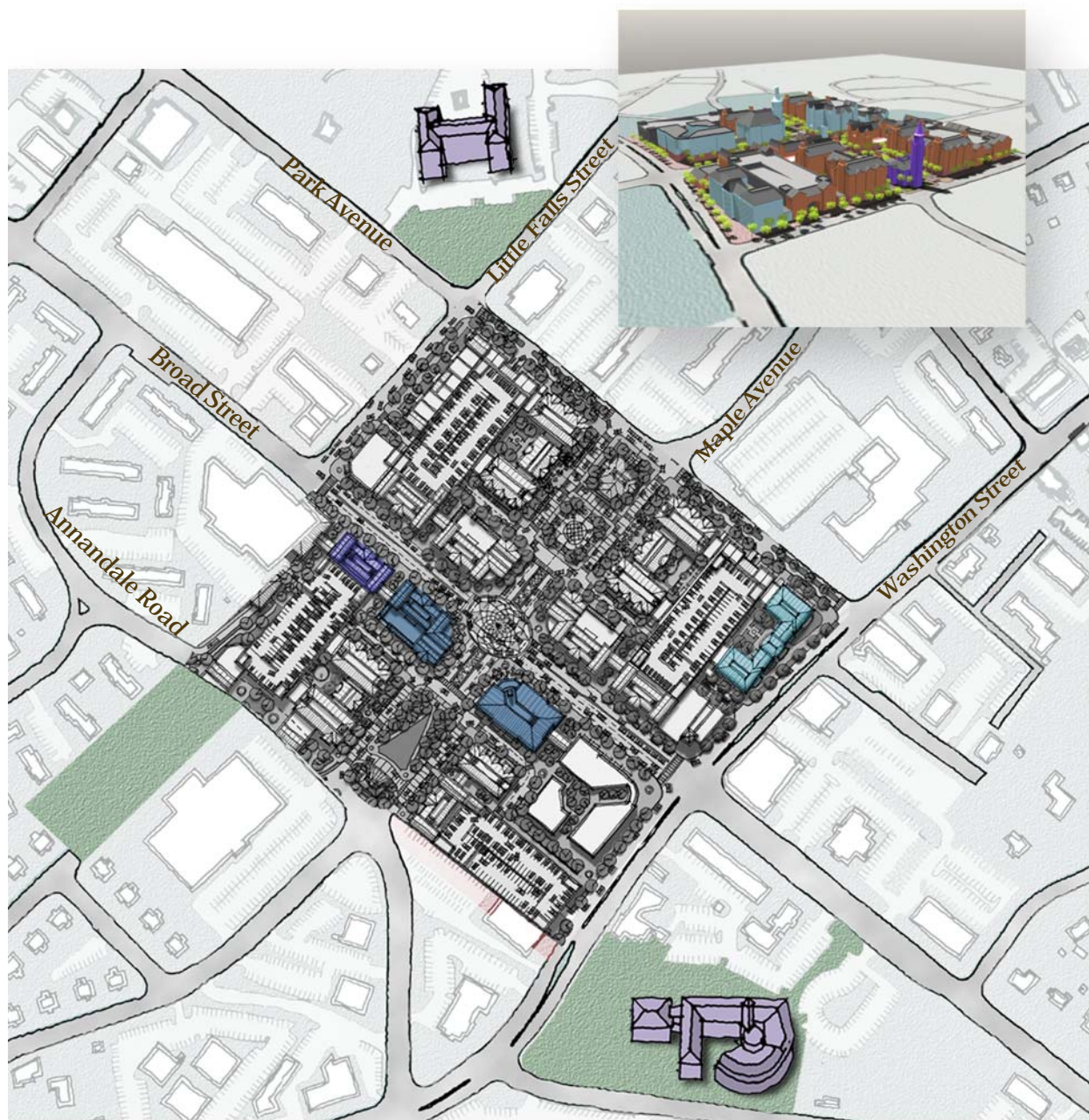
- ✧ **One mixed-use professional office building at 3 stories: 80,000-90,000 sf**
- ✧ **One stand-alone office building at 4 stories: 80,000-90,000 sf**
- ✧ **Two mixed-use office buildings at 6 stories: 150,000-170,000 sf**





***The total development illustrated for the core area is 730,000-1,000,000 sf, which equates to a FAR range of 1.35-1.85 as compared to the existing FAR of .25.***

3 3 3



- Six story mixed-use office
- Three to four story mixed-use office
- Three to four story single-use office



# *Connecting to the Great Place*

[CONNECTIONS PRINCIPLES.]

✂ ✂ ✂



*Last passenger train run by the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad, 1951*

✂ ✂ ✂



# Connection Principle One

[ESTABLISH A HIERARCHY OF MOVEMENT SYSTEMS.]



The existing road network in the City Center is **uniformly designed to maximize vehicular convenience and efficiency**. As the primary infrastructure that connects parts of the city, the **visual conditions of the road system should be reevaluated** based on value creation as well as traffic capacity and volume.

## **Broad and Washington Streets**

- ✧ **Vehicular priority.** Designate Broad and Washington Streets with a vehicular-based priority.
- ✧ **Buffer zone.** Redesign sidewalks with a green buffer area and add off-peak parallel parking.

## **Park Avenue, Little Falls Street and Annandale Road**

- ✧ **Neighborhood transition streets.** Designate Park Avenue, Little Falls Street and Annandale Road with balanced vehicular/pedestrian priorities.
- ✧ **Remove street parking.** Remove parking to ensure capacity.
- ✧ **Median.** Replace excessive street width with a boulevard median and/or a dedicated bikeway.





## **Maple Avenue**

- ✧ **Neighborhood amenity street.** Designate Maple Avenue as a neighborhood amenity street with a pedestrian-based priority.
- ✧ **Traffic calming.** Include measures to discourage cut-through traffic.
- ✧ **Street closures.** Create a traffic plan that anticipates frequent street closures for public events.
- ✧ **Pedestrian crossing.** Bias the Broad Street intersection toward pedestrian crossings by eliminating left-hand turns at this intersection and allocating the extra signal time to pedestrian crossing time.

*Establish a hierarchy of streets to create a system for decision-making and transportation planning that adds value and character to the development adjacent to those streets.*



-  Vehicular priority roads
-  Balanced vehicular/pedestrian priority roads
-  Pedestrian priority roads
-  Pedestrian-biased Broad Street crossing

# Mass Transit Considerations

[ CONNECTION PRINCIPLE ONE, CONTINUED. ]



*A*ny long-term plan should organize opportunities for many modes of transportation in addition to reconsidering the character of streets and sidewalks in the district. Transportation integration and diversity is required to maintain the long-term sustainability of this area as the new City Center for Falls Church. This is also a key strategy in identifying and attracting a number of potential funding sources. The following transportation recommendations should be included for this area's development plans:

- ✧ **Expand and integrate.** The proposed new pedestrian network of sidewalks, connectors and parking garage cores should be connected to a new perimeter pedestrian/bicycle path.
- ✧ **Incorporate bus service.** Provide significant bus stops along Broad and Washington Streets to accommodate service to and from both Metro stations in both the east/west and north/south directions. Support a circulator between the two Metro stations and City Center.
- ✧ **Investigate potential multi-modal interfaces.** Consider all four proposed garages and the proposed State Theater garage as transit facilities. Investigate opportunities to interface with other transit modes by including transit transfer plazas, Metro-oriented day parking, and specialty parking, such as Metro satellite parking.
- ✧ **Allow for future transit right-of-way.** Organize a long-term transit opportunity right-of-way by creating a future transit corridor at a new 'Rolling Road' right-of-way.



*All modes of transportation from pedestrian systems and parking operations to bus interfaces and future mass-transit opportunities should be integrated into a single comprehensive system.*

3 3 3



- Sidewalk and via system
- Expanded pedestrian/bike path
- Bus stop interface
- Mass transit interface

# Connection Principle Two

[CREATE AN OPEN SPACE SYSTEM THAT CONNECTS.]



***T**here are a number of civic, historic, and community facilities that play an important social role in the community but are physically isolated. Similarly, the open spaces throughout the area also lack connections. These assets need to be incorporated into a comprehensive network with the following characteristics:*

- ✧ **Expansion.** Encourage creative expansion and expression of the City Hall, State Theater, the Falls Church and the Post Office beyond their traditional borders.
- ✧ **Monuments.** Produce or enhance monuments to significant physical and cultural elements of the district including Big Chimneys, the Rolling Road, Brown's Hardware and others.
- ✧ **Diverse open spaces.** Diversify a collection of open spaces by introducing landscaping, hardscaping, and gardens within the park system.
- ✧ **Connections.** Link new and existing park spaces with park streets and pedestrian paths.



*Sites of note in Falls Church should have a physical presence within the downtown that extends into the public realm.*












*Encourage creative expansion and expression of the City Hall, the State Theater, the Falls Church and the post office beyond their traditional "borders."*



*Use existing civic, historic and community facilities as catalysts to activate adjacent parts of the city with public spaces and/or expansions. Connect these unique places with an easy and safe, 'Falls Church Memory Mile' pedestrian/ bicycle path throughout the district.*



- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  City Hall         |  Civic Monument   |  Big Chimneys     |
|  Democracy Square  |  Brown's Hardware |  Rolling Road     |
|  The State Theater |  Freedom Square   |  The Falls Church |



# Connection Principle Three

[CREATE A DISTINCT IDENTITY FOR DOWNTOWN.]



*The commercial corridor is indistinguishable from other surrounding neighborhoods in Falls Church.* With the successful completion of the public squares and the development around it, the adjacent sites are prime candidates for new development. They should be part of this limited, unique district, as defined by:

- ✧ **Zoning.** A special zoning overlay that promotes an increase in density and distinguishing urban patterns, particularly at the edge of the district.
- ✧ **Streetscape.** A streetscape system that includes significant gateway markers at the edge of the district and public amenities unique to the area.
- ✧ **Marketing and events effort.** A coordinated marketing and events effort that markets the district and its central place as a destination rather than specific uses or users.



*Create a distinct identity for the City Center with clear edges of 'urban' development, distinct gateway markers and unique, identifiable amenities throughout the district.*



*Irregular and missing streetscape elements provide little consistency throughout the district.*



*Fill in the gaps to create a consistent streetscape environment for the district.*

# *Development Implementation Strategies*

[MAKING CITY CENTER A REALITY.]

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*Broadening of East Broad Street from two to four lanes, 1952*

§ § §

# Phasing and Schedule

[ MAKING THE GREAT PLACE A REALITY. ]



***I** t is unlikely that the entire four-block core area will be developed as single project.* This is not a result so much of the size of the project, but rather the desire by the City to ensure a substantial amount of office/commercial space in the development. This objective will likely require a phased approach.

In fact, it may not be desirable for the entire City Center to be developed at once. A key function of the public's investment will be to spark private redevelopment around the squares as a result of the great place address created in the initial phase. Subsequent phases should maintain the flexibility to capitalize on changes in the market. Based on the success of the first phase, opportunities in the marketplace that do not currently consider Falls Church are likely to develop as a result of the initial phase.

Because the market response after the initial phase is unknown, scheduling and investment considerations should be prioritized to achieve the implementation of the initial phase, while maintaining maximum flexibility in future opportunities and phases.



***All public policies, decisions and investments should focus on the successful completion of the initial phase, while retaining maximum flexibility for any future opportunities in and adjacent to the City Center.***

3 3 3



Core redevelopment area

# Initial Phase and Critical Mass

[ MAKING THE GREAT PLACE A REALITY. ]



*A* **n important issue on these types of projects is always, “what is the first phase?”** The answer to this question revolves around the issue of the minimum ‘critical mass’ of development required. Unlike future phases where the address has already been created, the initial phase must be anchored in existing market demands and large enough to be successful without any future phases.

- ✂ **Requirements.** The great place strategy requires the completion of Democracy Square, north of Broad Street. This initiative requires the development of the two blocks on the north of Broad Street.
- ✂ **Residential.** Residential uses will be the foundation of the initial phase because of their market demand. A minimum of 200 units are required to support the management infrastructure while 350-400 units are required to provide a variety of housing types, i.e. rental vs. owner, apartment vs. townhomes, etc.

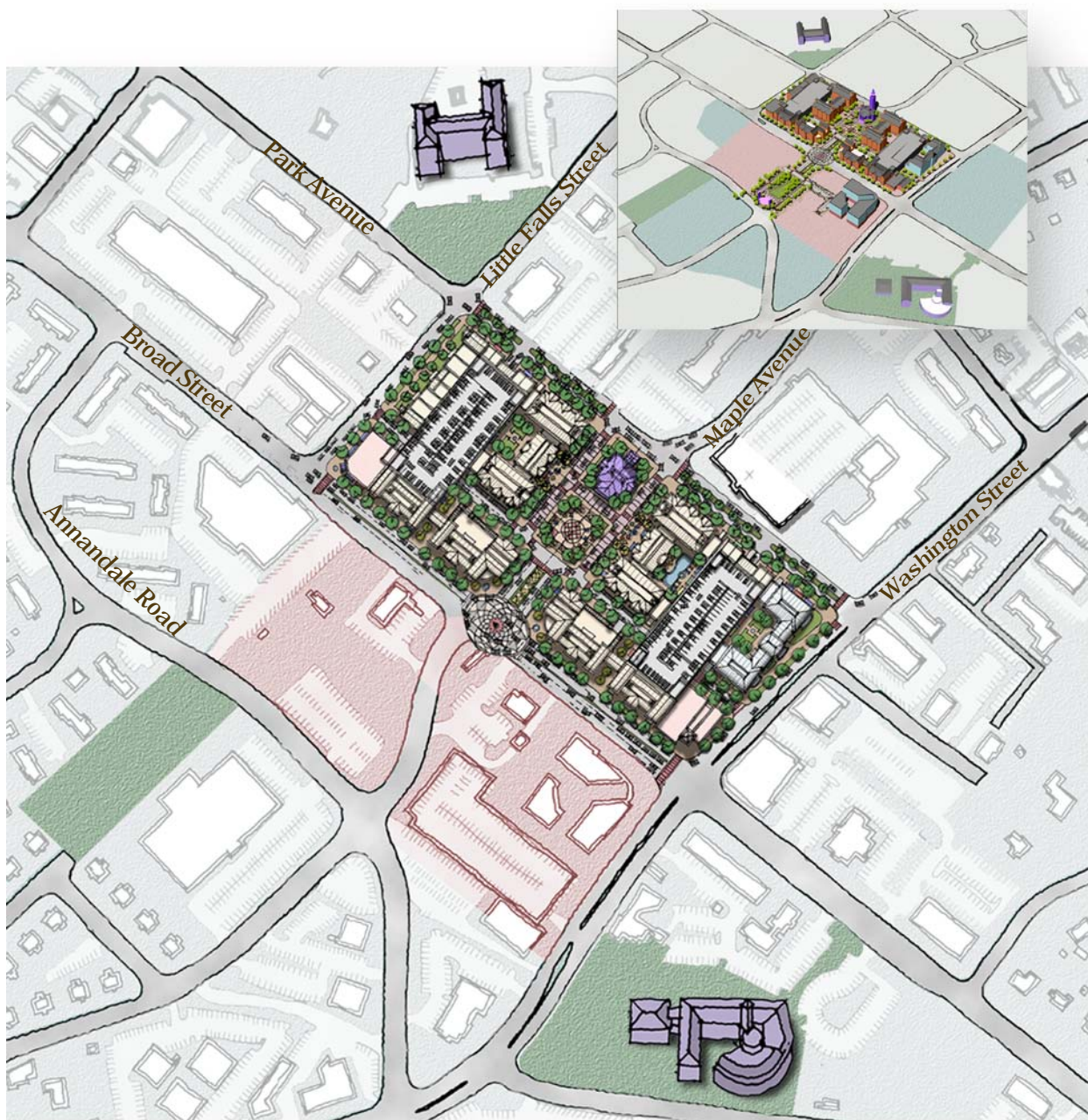
The north side of Broad Street is currently a more favorable location for residential, particularly for-sale residential, because of the character of the surrounding neighborhoods. Office uses should be one-third or less of the square footage of the residential in Phase One to assure the success of the residential in establishing the character of the place.

- ✂ **Retail.** Retail uses will require around 90,000 square feet on the two blocks to create enough critical mass to attract a destination visit, to surround the public space and to create tenant collections.
- ✂ **Office.** Office use will play a secondary role since it relies on a limited number of pre-leasing opportunities. It should not be located on the public space, but rather at the periphery where its timing can be managed separately.



***The initial phase should be built on the north side of Broad Street around a new Democracy Square. It should include at least 350 units of residential, and at least 90,000 sf of retail space, including four restaurants around the public space. Office may be considered, pending market opportunities.***

3 3 3



*Suggested Phase One development*



# Expansion Parcels and Opportunities

[ MAKING THE GREAT PLACE A REALITY. ]



***The two blocks south of Broad Street around the proposed Freedom Square should be considered as a single second phase.*** Because of the existing George Mason Square, it is not likely to accommodate two additional office buildings and still have space for a minimal amount of viable residential units.

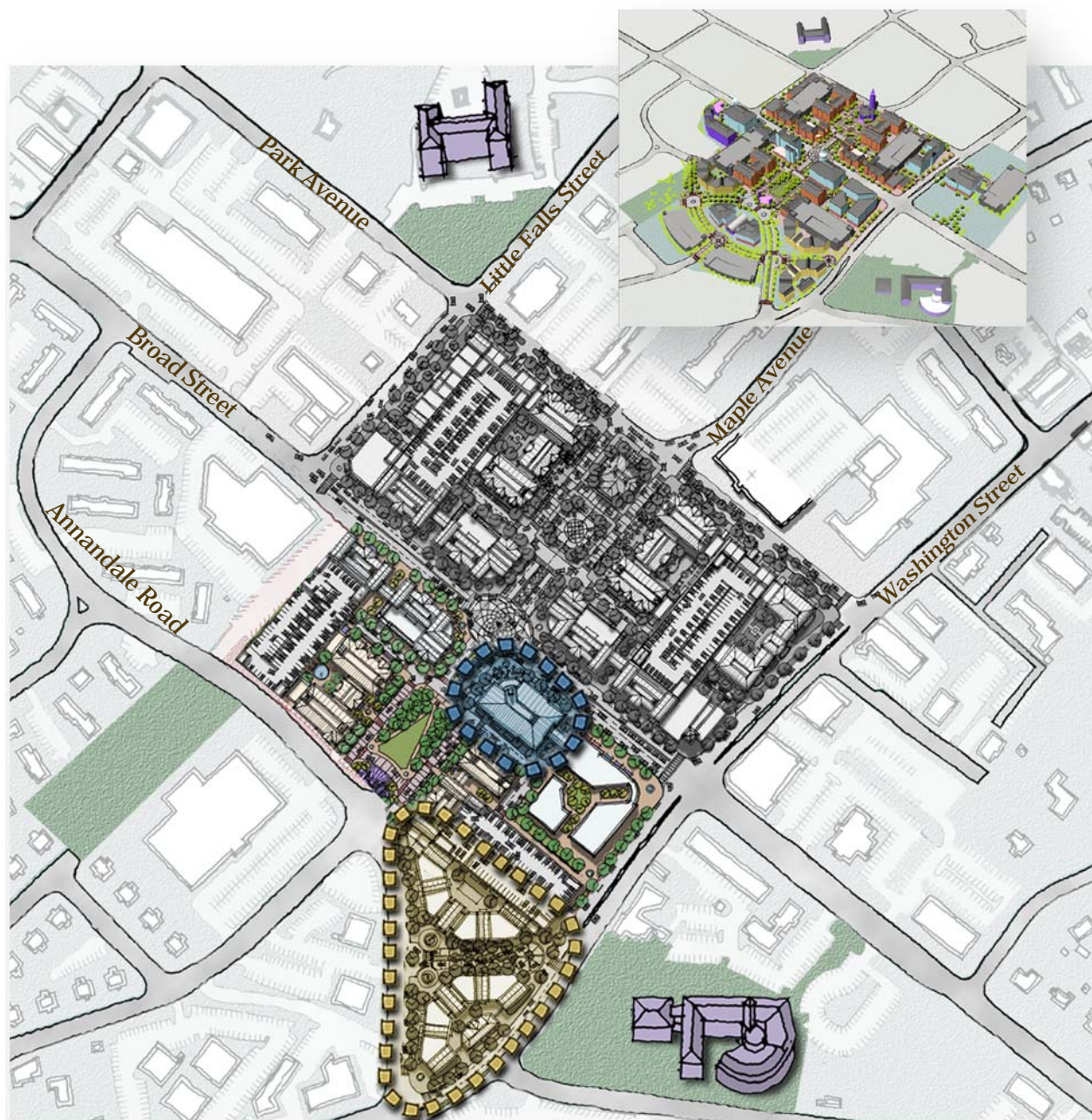
## ***Development options.***

There are two development opportunities that can be considered on this side of Broad Street:

- ✧ ***Phase 1B.*** This subphase might include a single office building on Broad Street and Maple Avenue adjacent to George Mason Square. A prime benefit of this location is the opportunity to utilize a new parking garage. This subphase would not require the building of Freedom Square until the second office building and supporting retail/residential buildings around the public space are ready for development.
- ✧ ***Residential.*** Additional single-use (no ground floor retail) residential south of the George Mason Square block should be considered as part of the development core to help balance the commercial population of the office buildings.

***The two blocks south of Broad Street around the proposed Freedom Square should be considered as a single second phase. Their development timing should consider the feasibility of providing two new office buildings to the City Center.***

3 3 3



■ Phase 1B

■ Additional single-use residential

# Redevelopment Spin-Off Sites

[ MAKING THE GREAT PLACE A REALITY. ]



***T**here are several sites included within the redevelopment area for future opportunities, including:*

- ✧ The State Theater site
- ✧ The Post Office site
- ✧ The bowling alley site and adjacent parcels

***Because of their limited size and/or secondary locations, these sites are not candidates for redevelopment on their own or as part of a first phase.*** They have the same negatives as the land within the core area without the ability to create the great place to help generate a market to overcome those hurdles, as well as high land cost, multiple ownership, and insufficient parking.

***Zoning.*** Zoning and land-use flexibility for these sites should be maximized so that they can be marketed as single-use, commercially driven opportunities in the regional market.

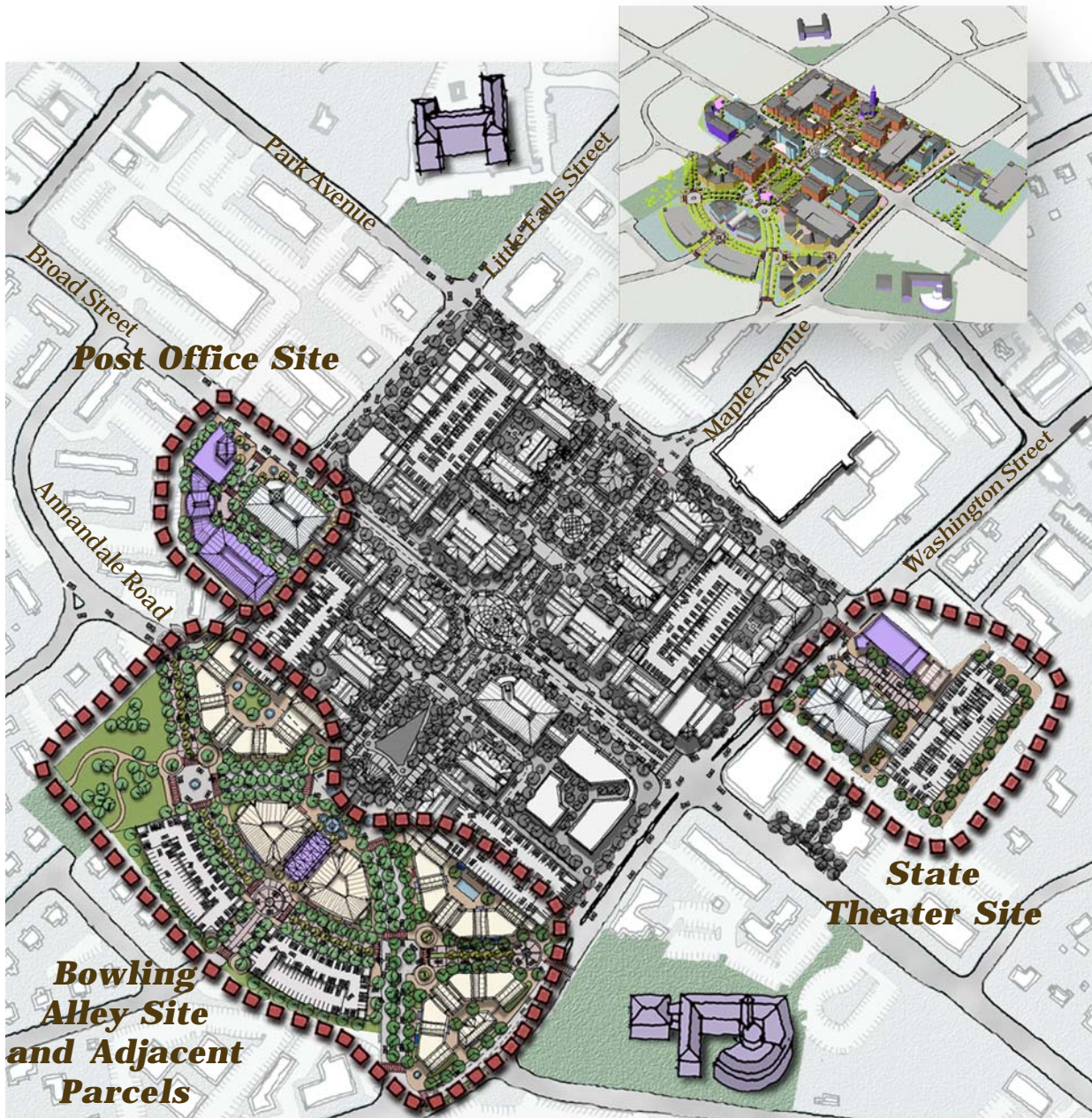
***Consolidated parcel.*** Close Maple Avenue south of Freedom Square to consolidate a large parcel with a prominent Freedom Square address to attract a significant entity to help anchor that portion of the City Center. Potential candidates might include:

- ✧ Educational uses
- ✧ Recreational uses
- ✧ Health-care uses
- ✧ Governmental uses
- ✧ Commercial uses



*Prepare land-use strategies to maximize redevelopment potential of adjoining parcels pending the development of the City Center. Consider closing South Maple Avenue to create a significant anchor parcel for marketing concurrent with the development of the core area.*

3 3 3



**■** Spin-off sites

# Schedule

[ MAKING THE GREAT PLACE A REALITY. ]



***T**here are three basic stages required for the initial phase of development: the public consensus stage, public/private predevelopment stage, and the development stage.* Not including political considerations, the following schedule illustrates a general process that could take from 36 to 42 months which would anticipate an initial phase opening during 2005.

<b>Public Consensus</b> (Nine to twelve months)	<b>Public/Private Predevelopment</b> (Nine to twelve months)	<b>Development Phase</b> (Eighteen to twenty-four months)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✧ Public hearings</li><li>✧ Council Approval</li><li>✧ Public funding process</li><li>✧ Design private process</li><li>✧ Developer solicitation</li><li>✧ Development partner designation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✧ Appraisals</li><li>✧ Relocation plan</li><li>✧ Property acquisitions</li><li>✧ Land disposition agreement</li><li>✧ Community outreach</li><li>✧ Traffic/engineering</li><li>✧ Planning and design</li><li>✧ Agency approvals</li><li>✧ Key tenant pre-leasing</li><li>✧ Close project financing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✧ Project mobilization</li><li>✧ Complete documentation</li><li>✧ Complete pricing</li><li>✧ Leasing and tenant coordination</li><li>✧ Construction</li><li>✧ Opening</li></ul>



***To accomplish the initial phase of development, three stages will require 36 to 42 months which would project an initial phase opening of mid-2005.***



# *Development Economic Issues*

[FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS.]

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*Falls Church Bank, circa 1960*

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# Development Economic Issues

[ KEY ASSUMPTIONS . ]



*The illustrated City Center development program has an approximately \$180 million to \$200 million total project cost. The illustrated initial phase (north blocks) has an anticipated total project cost of \$100 million to \$120 million.<sup>†</sup>*

Under the program assumed for the four-block core area the following summary development costs represent the results of a detailed and specific proforma analyses for each type of building use.

**Land costs: \$20 million to \$30 million.** Land costs in the four-block core area are currently appraised very high. While currently configured with small parcels of varying ownership, it is implausible to plan and finance any new development to afford those prices. However, these appraisals have been the basis for taxation and market expectations.

**Structured parking costs: \$25 million to \$35 million.** The parking provided for the proposed development program in the City Center is as follows:

<b>Parcels</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Shared Provided</b>
North Initial Phase	1,450	1,200
South Parcels*	1,450	1,200
<b>Total Core Area</b>	<b>2,900</b>	<b>2,400</b>

<sup>†</sup>For additional information, please see Technical Appendix 1

\* This includes the replacement of 250 existing cars at George Mason Square.

***If successful, the direct spin-off development as a result of this core development could be expected another \$180-\$200 million for a total redevelopment district of \$400 million.***

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***This ratio is less than a 20 percent reduction in required spaces due to shared uses.*** It is well within the range of standard practice around the country. The total number of structured spaces can be added to the anticipated amount of forty parallel parking spaces within the City Center to produce a total of 2,450 parking spaces within the four-block core area.

To provide this number of structured parking spaces requires that each of the four proposed parking garages have six levels of parking. The assumption for this analysis is that each parking garage is:

- § 350 square feet per car on average
- § Five stories or fifty feet tall (six levels of parking)
- § Open-air ventilated and equipped with sprinklers
- § Shared between uses except one reserved space per residential unit
- § Free and unmanned for security
- § Buildable for a hard construction cost of \$10,000 per space plus soft costs and land for the garage, if required

# Development Economic Issues

[ KEY ASSUMPTIONS, CONTINUED. ]

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***P*ublic Spaces and Facilities Cost: \$10 million to \$15 million.** The character and quality of the public realm is critical to the short-term success and long-term value of the downtown core area. In addition, significant public facilities are proposed as a key component to the strategy.

The quality level of two public squares and public rights-of-way such as the sidewalks, vias and other public ways, have been assumed at a level consistent with other similar projects recently built in the Washington, DC area.

Although critical to the success of the strategy, no cost has been assumed in this analysis for the public facilities located in the two squares. This is due in part to the lack of programming at this time and also because this analysis assumes that they would be achieved under other budget/finance considerations. They remain, however, a fundamental component to the success of the City Center.

## ***Buildings and infrastructure: \$120 million to \$130 million.***

Building development costs vary according to use and location within the project. These cost range variations are largely the effect of allocating land and parking costs proportionally by varying uses on blocks of various sizes.

<i>Use</i>	<i>Cost/sf</i>
Retail	\$240-\$255
Residential	\$210-\$225
Office	\$175-\$190



**Annual Development Income: \$17 million to \$19 million.** Anticipated income for the project is based on both the market strategy and current conditions. The income stream anticipated in this analysis is 'realistically aggressive.' It is based on national and local experience that suggests an approximate 15 percent rent increase for quality buildings located directly adjacent to one of these great places.

Certainly a key exercise in the predevelopment phase of this will be the confirmation of these income assumptions. In general, the average effective rents (triple net) projected in this analysis to generate income estimates were as follows:

<b>Use</b>	<b>Effective Rent/sf</b>	<b>Occupancy</b>
Retail*	\$25.00 - \$27.00	95%
Residential	\$1.95 - \$2.05	95%
Office**	\$22.50 - \$25.50	94%

\*Retail/Restaurant Blend

\*\*Class A/Professional Blend

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**For the core area development, direct revenues to the City of Falls Church could reasonably be expected to reach \$2 million to \$3 million annually.**

# Development Economic Issues

[ KEY ASSUMPTIONS , CONTINUED . ]

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***P*erformance Thresholds.** To attract the investment capital necessary to fund the development, there are a number of sensitive areas to be considered. First, what are the returns that public and private investors could reasonably expect as a result of the risk associated with the project? Each investor type, private, publicly-traded REITs, institutional, for example, have different risk criteria and thresholds required for their investments. Public/private joint ventures and mixed-use developments are more financially complicated. The pool of potential participants is limited which makes the sensitivity to these returns high. For the purpose of this analysis, the following unleveraged return thresholds were the assumed basis required to attract the broadest range of capital:

<b><i>Use</i></b>	<b><i>Return</i></b>
Retail	12.5%
Residential	10.5%
Office	12.5%
Mixed-Use Blended	11.5%

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***To meet the return thresholds to attract private capital investment, a cost gap of approximately \$25 million to \$35 million is anticipated for City Center; \$15 million to \$20 million for the initial phase.***

***This public investment would be matched by an expected private investment of \$155 million to \$165 million; \$85 million to \$100 million for the initial phase.***

# *City Participation*

[PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.]

❧ ❧ ❧



*Ladies Aid Society of Falls Church Presbyterian Church, circa 1890*

❧ ❧ ❧



# Public Participation

[ P R I N C I P L E S O F P U B L I C P A R T I C I P A T I O N . ]

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*The economic information in this development plan was provided not only as a reality check on feasibility and implementation, but to establish a framework for proceeding with next steps in the planning and decision making process.*

As outlined in the introduction, the market inputs and development costing have been scrutinized on many levels. Based on these carefully prepared economic inputs, preliminary development proformas indicate market support for \$155 million to \$165 million in conventional private financing, leaving a potential unfunded gap, inclusive of all base infrastructure public improvements, of \$25 million to \$35 million. This is very common to urban redevelopment of this sort, although the proportional amount of required supplemental financing relative to the overall development cost (well under 20 percent) is substantially less than is often typical in other situations.

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*The development gap of \$25 million to \$35 million is less than half of the anticipated \$55 million to \$80 million cost for land, parking and open space. This gives the city tremendous flexibility in determining the approach to their investment strategy.*

*The initial estimates of direct tax revenues associated with the build out of the proposed core area are estimated to exceed \$3.0 million a year.* Of this, roughly 65 percent would be derived from direct real estate taxes and 35 percent would come from the combination of personal property taxes, the City share of retail and meals taxes, BPOL income, utility taxes and other incremental sources of City revenue. Deducting in the vicinity of \$1.0 million for possible additional City annual operating costs, (50 percent education related) results in a probable net fiscal gain of \$2.0+ million per year at built out. This compares with a net current positive fiscal revenue estimated in the range of \$400,000 per year for the subject 12.38 acres of land along with some 140,000 square feet of existing improved building area.

While the above fiscal numbers are only preliminary, and under independent review and fuller study as part of the City's next steps of evaluation, the order of magnitude of these results speak to the great potential for this project proposal to help feed the City's broader financial needs. First, this level of directly generated surplus tax revenues should well exceed any public collateral obligations. Put another way, the payback on whatever level of financial backing the City may assist with in closing the initial economic gap should well exceed the costs. Second, the greater payback to the City will come from the multiplier effects caused by the catalytic impact of this new "Great Place." These anticipated synergies will be derived most recognizable from the anticipated spin off development on currently underused parcels adjacent to the core area, and more subtlety from the hallow effect enhancing the overall Falls Church commercial tax base.

# Development Strategies

[ MAKING DEVELOPMENT FEASIBLE. ]




***How will this potential economic gap be financed?*** There are a variety of standard financing tools that the private investment community can help leverage, opportunities enhanced by the fundamental strength of the background market for the mix of uses proposed at City Center. Although the ultimate deal structure underwriting the overall project is yet to be determined, and will depend on the specifics of the parties that end up in negotiations, there are a wide range of supplemental financing sources that collectively would help close the prospective economic gap:

- ✧ Federal transportation money (particularly to support transit oriented smart growth).
- ✧ State of Virginia funds for transportation and parking related improvements.
- ✧ Employing tax-free bond financing, capable in itself of funding the entire estimated gap, and especially well suited to financing land acquisition and parking structures.
- ✧ Allocation of existing municipal budgets toward “public” improvements that would occur regardless.
- ✧ Current landowner partnerships and ownership swaps.
- ✧ Tax abatement/increment financing mechanisms (some requiring State of Virginia legislative review).
- ✧ Federally supported small business loans for redevelopment tenants.



***Public participation will consist of a unique combination of conventional government functions used for a combination of conventional public purposes.***



 **Over the next few weeks, the City will translate the implications of the plan presented so far into hard economic numbers and implementation elements**, including the range of possible financing structures upon which a final go forward commitment will be based. In exploring the multiple approaches to financing the estimated economic gap, any decision to proceed should be based on five fundamental principles:

- ✧ **The city's investment should be in tangible assets. "They own something."** Rather than subsidizing components of the real estate, public money will go towards tangible assets that should increase in value with the long-term success of the development.
- ✧ **The city's investment should show a return.** No action or investment will be justified unless the multiples of return from the combination of direct and indirect revenues is substantial more than any direct City of Falls Church outlay. A key purpose of this proposed project is to help transform the entire downtown commercial area, not simply the core four block sector featured in the initial Great Place plan.
- ✧ **The development should be self-funding.** Notwithstanding the broader catalytic power and expected results downtown wide, any actual cash investment on the part of Falls Church should also have a minimum break-even return over the early years, escalating well into the positive as the new development matures and any initial funding is paid down.

# Development Strategies

[PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PRINCIPLES, CONTINUED.]

- 8 ***A specific exit strategy must be developed for each phase of the city's investments.*** No action should proceed without also a fallback, worst-case scenario, that insulates the city from financial risk. The land/parking garage/public space investment elements of the Great Place plan are intended to provide a platform for returns from multiple markets regardless of the specifics of the plan presented.
- 8 ***The development and public investment plan must be future flexible.*** Each phase of the development should carry its own weight and not rely on uncertain future commitments to balance economic equations.

# City Center Development Strategy

[ SUMMARY. ]

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*Brown's Hardware and Grocery Store, circa 1890*

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# City Center Development Strategy

[ SUMMARY STATEMENT. ]



***This Falls Church Strategic Development Plan is undertaken with the premise that the goal is to get something successful built. NOW. In order to be competitive, Falls Church must:***

- ✧ Capitalize on its strengths (housing, location and history).
- ✧ Create an address in the market to attract office.
- ✧ Target its retail ambition to providing for the City of Falls Church and surrounding residents.

***1. This requires the city to embark on what we call ‘the great place strategy’ which means:***

- ✧ Consolidate control of a significant amount of land.
- ✧ Create a great public gathering place.
- ✧ Anchor it with important public facilities.
- ✧ Support the community life of Falls Church.
- ✧ Attract a critical mass of unique private development.

***2. Follow three basic development principles which are:***

- ✧ Create two great public squares along Maple Avenue which are anchored by important public buildings.
- ✧ Focus on the development of the four blocks adjacent to these public squares with mixed-use development and an effective parking system.
- ✧ Connect this development to surrounding parcels and infrastructure to maximize future development and knit it into the existing fabric of the city.

**3. The illustrated City Center development program has an approximately \$180 million to \$200 million total project cost. The illustrated initial phase (north blocks) has an anticipated total project cost of \$100 million to \$120 million.**

- ✧ If successful, the direct spin-off development as a result of this core development could be expected to result in \$180 million to \$200 million for a total redevelopment district of \$400 million.

**4. To meet the return thresholds to attract private capital investment, a cost gap of approximately \$25 million to \$35 million is anticipated for City Center; \$15 million to \$20 million for the initial phase.**

**5. For the City Center development, direct revenues to the City of Falls Church could reasonably be expected to reach \$2 million to \$3 million annually.**





# Next Steps

[WHERE TO GO FROM HERE.]

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*Falls Church receives the award of All-America City, 1962*

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# Next Steps

[ W H E R E   T O   G O   F R O M   H E R E . ]



- ✧ ***Initiate City Council Action.*** Without the support of the City of Falls Church's local officials, no further debate is necessary. Following debate on the intent, content and conclusions of the City Center Strategic Development Plan, city council's action on the plan should offer future direction to the community with respect to its downtown area.
- ✧ ***Undertake the Process to Designate an Overlay District for City Center.*** With the guidance of the Development Services, an overlay district for the City Center should be prepared as an addition to the Comprehensive Plan and the City's Zoning Ordinance to accommodate the densities outlined in this document. This effort should be undertaken with the goal of encouraging developer flexibility within this area, based on the submission of concept plans that meet the City's goals for City Center redevelopment.

Any requirements for two floors of commercial space in mixed-use buildings that include residential should not only be eliminated for City Center, but for the entire community. Every developer in the country will have tremendous difficulty obtaining financing for a building that includes three uses in this submarket. This requirement will hinder good quality and real estate growth in Falls Church.

***Best wishes in pursuit of a vibrant, representative, high quality, uniquely Falls Church, source of pride – a new City Center!***

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§ ***Create and Distribute a Developer Request for Proposals.***

Upon city council approval, a Developer Request for Proposals should be drafted. This process should be based on competitive selection as determined by a number of factors, such as experience with similar projects, personnel capabilities, access to funding and funding sources as well as agreement with the City Center Strategic Development Plan. Noncompliance with this document should not be discouraged. However, to ensure evaluation of comparable submissions, developers who disagree with provisions of this document should offer alternatives to the path, concept, costs or financing proposed herein.

§ ***Investigate Specific Funding Opportunities, Aggressively.***

Each year, the City of Falls Church misses opportunities for funding that could enhance the community's position to make infrastructure improvements, to increase services, and to attract development. The assignment of this task to a qualified individual could result in significant funds available to serve as the public's contribution to private investments.





# *Technical Appendix*

[THE NUMBERS BEHIND THE ISSUES.]

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# Summary Proforma

[ TOTAL CITY CENTER AREA. ]

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Key Assumptions	Units	Program Range	
<b>Office Space</b>		230,000 gsf	to 260,000 gsf
Net Efficiency	94%	216,200 nsf	to 244,400 nsf
<b>Residential Space</b>	1,100 gsf/unit	400,000 gsf	to 600,000 gsf
Net Efficiency	88% 968 nsf/unit	450,000 nsf	to 500,000 nsf
<b>Retail Space</b>		100,000 gla	to 140,000 gla
Net Efficiency	100%	100,000 gla	to 140,000 gla
<b>Garage Space</b>	325 sf/car	720,000 sf	to 780,000 sf
Net Efficiency	100%	720,000 sf	to 780,000 sf
<b>Total Development Program</b>		<b>1,450,000 gsf</b>	<b>to 1,780,000 gsf</b>

Income Assumptions	Units	Program Range	
<b>Office Space</b>		188,000 nsf	to 235,000 nsf
Rent/sf nnn		\$22.50	to \$25.50
Net Occupancy	94%	\$4,000,000	to \$6,200,000
Leasing Costs		\$3.00	to \$3.50
Tenant Improvements above Shell		\$18.00	to \$21.00
CAM Charges		\$7.00	to \$9.00
<b>Residential Space</b>		450,000 nsf	to 500,000 nsf
Rent/sf nnn		\$1.95	to \$2.05
Occupancy Cost	25%	\$1.40	to \$1.60
Net Occupancy	95%	\$7,500,000	to \$9,000,000
<b>Retail Space</b>		135,000 gla	to 145,000 gla
Rent/sf nnn		\$25.00	to \$27.00
Net Occupancy	95%	\$3,500,000	to \$3,800,000
Leasing Costs		\$2.50	to \$3.00
Tenant Improvements above Shell		\$25.00	to \$75.00
CAM Charges		\$7.00	to \$9.00
<b>Total Income Program</b>		<b>\$15,000,000</b>	<b>to \$19,000,000</b>



Expense Assumptions	Units	Program Range		
Land Acquisition	16.08 Acres	\$20,000,000	to	\$30,000,000
Sitework		\$15,000,000	to	\$19,000,000
Pre-development		\$500,000	to	\$700,000
Office Hard Cost (Shell)	\$75 per sf	\$15,000,000	to	\$19,000,000
Residential Hard Cost	\$80 per sf	\$40,000,000	to	\$44,000,000
Retail Hard Cost (Vanilla F	\$80 per sf	\$11,000,000	to	\$12,000,000
Parking Hard Cost	\$30 per sf	\$25,000,000	to	\$35,000,000
Soft costs (inc.consultants, legal, fees, proj.mgmt., mktg )		\$30,000,000	to	\$34,000,000
Developer fee		\$3,500,000	to	\$4,300,000
Contingency		\$10,000,000	to	\$12,000,000
Leasing Costs		\$8,000,000	to	\$10,000,000
<b>Total Expense Program</b>		<b>\$178,000,000</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>\$220,000,000</b>

<b>Total Project Performance Unleveraged Return</b>	<b>9.50%</b>
Projected Performance Gap	\$25,000,000 to \$35,000,000
Gap Sensitivity	Blended Return 11.50%



